

Seoul Aide Denies President Park's Lobby Role

By William Chapman
Washington Post Foreign Service

SEOUL—A spokesman for South Korean President Park Chung Hee denied yesterday that there had been any secret meetings in the president's official home to map plans for covertly lobbying the U.S. Congress.

The spokesman denounced as a "completely false accusation" a statement by Rep. Donald M. Fraser (D-Minn.) that placed President Park at a meeting where the lobbying plans involving Tongsun Park were formulated in 1970.

Fraser said Wednesday that U.S. intelligence reports showed that President Park was present at at least one strategy meeting held in the Blue House, the official presidential residence and office.

"In fact, there never were any such 'secret strategy meetings' at the Blue House and naturally President Park could not be present at a meeting that never took place," the spokesman said in a statement.

"We deeply deplore that completely false accusations are being made openly and without any factual ground and find it difficult not to question motivations of those who make such fictitious allegations."

Fraser said one plan was discussed that would have placed Tongsun Park in charge of all lobbying operations in the United States, including those of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

He said the intelligence reports show that President Park and his advisers rejected that plan because of objections from a rival faction also engaged in lobbying in Washington.

The categorical denial that any such meetings took place in the Blue House was the government's first reaction to Fraser's statement and until last night the Korean public had not been informed that the charges had been made. Newspapers, which frequently are under government guidance here, reported parts of Fraser's statement but did not mention the alleged involvement of President Park or the secret meetings.

Fraser is chairman of the House International Relations Subcommittee that has been looking into possible connections between Tongsun Park, the indicted Korean rice dealer and lobbyist, and his government in Seoul.

The statement, issued here by Blue House spokesman Lim Bang Hyun, also said that the reliability of the intelligence reports referred to by Fraser had been "openly disputed" by a U.S. government official.

Lim may have been referring to remarks William J. Porter, U.S. ambassador to South Korea in the early 1970s, made before the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct Wednesday. Porter said he was skeptical about the reliability of the reports and implied that they had come from a Korean official in Seoul.

Last August, CIA Director Stansfield Turner said no U.S. intelligence agency had ever taped or bugged the Blue House. Investigators for the Fraser subcommittee said the source for the reports was considered "highly reliable," but said there was no evidence of a bug or wiretap on President Park's residence.

The South Korean government has denied repeatedly that Tongsun Park's lobbying was done at its direction, insisting that whatever he did he did independently.

It also has resisted vigorously attempts of American investigators to look into a possible connection. Before Tongsun Park was questioned here by Justice Department officials earlier this year, an agreement was signed by the U.S. and South Korean governments prohibiting Park's interrogators from asking questions about present officials of the Korean government.

Late last fall, the Fraser subcommittee's investigators were given a frosty reception in Seoul because it was known they were interested in pursuing possible links between Tongsun Park and government leaders.

The Park government had been hoping that the lobbying affair would blow over quickly once it had agreed—after first refusing—to permit Tongsun Park to be questioned both here and in Washington.

Faced with an initial withdrawal of U.S. troops this year, Seoul has been anxious about receiving more than \$800 million worth of military equipment those units would leave behind. Legislation permitting that transfer is being held up in Congress. It is believed unlikely as long as the Tongsun Park affair is alive.

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